

# University of Michigan Board for Student Publications

## Minutes of January 12, 2026 Board Meeting

Board members present: Jewel Gopwani (Chair), Ann Marie Aliotta, Jillian Berman, John Copeland, Geoff Gagnon, Ann Marie Lipinski, Robin Luce-Herrmann, Kyle Nowels, and Walter Middlebrook

Board members absent: None

*The Michigan Daily* was represented by: Zach Ajluni, Cici Copenhaver, and Edith Pendell

The *Gargoyle* was represented by: Sabrina Barnes and Xolo Hernandez-Herrera

*SHEI Magazine* was represented by: Erin Casey and Grace Donnelly

The *Michiganensian* was represented by: Sydney Lount

The Student Publications Staff was represented by: Kathy Ciesinski, Dave Richmond and Ben Widdison

Others Present: None

Chair Jewel Gopwani called the meeting to order at 5:34 p.m.

### New Attendee Introductions

With the changes in student leaders and board members, a brief round of introductions took place.

### Minutes

A motion to approve the November 17, 2025 meeting minutes was made by John, seconded by Kyle, and passed without dissent.

### Public Comments

None

### Publication Updates

#### ***SHEI Magazine - Reporting by Erin and Grace***

- Applications opened January 8<sup>th</sup> for new members
- Fall print launch for “Fake Idols Club” was a huge success
- First meeting of the new year with the editorial board and print editors was Sunday, January 11<sup>th</sup>.
- Winter print theme will be chosen soon
- Business team preparing for new members after Winterfest
- Grant writing is in the works
- Fall 2025 funding surpasses initial expectations
- Working on financial initiatives, including fundraising events

#### ***The Michiganensian - Reporting by Sydney***

- D2 proofed and submitted and D3 was submitted on January 10<sup>th</sup>
- Looking to hire new staff at Winterfest on January 13<sup>th</sup>
- First all staff meeting is January 20<sup>th</sup>
- Focusing on D4, which is due January 26<sup>th</sup>
- Worked with professional staff before winter break on setting up commemorative ads
- Opening next year’s e-board applications at the beginning of February
- December’s Grad Extravaganza went well although traffic and sales were down. Contributing factors could be the unfavorable weather and Barnes & Noble starting their grad attire sales prior to Thanksgiving break.

- Ring sales went very well for Jostens
- Currently working on promoting commemorative ads
- Preparing for spring Grad Extravaganza

***The Michigan Daily - Updates on the following items provided by Cici, Zach and Edith***

- New leadership has officially started in their positions
- Excited to meet the Board and student leaders from Michiganansian, Gargoyle and SHEI
- End of the year/break items of note: Year in Photos, new football coach, new President, 2025 Sex Survey results, recruitment efforts and vertical content partnership
- First print edition of the semester is January 14<sup>th</sup>
- All new managers on the business staff have started their respective positions
- Excited to build connections as a team and strengthen connections and culture between business and edit
- Strategy working toward alumni/WMG connections
- Both teams preparing for Love Notes and Graduation Issue/Baby Ads

**Committee Reports**

***Operations Committee:***

Jewel, Walter, Geoff, Ann Marie Lipinski, Ben and Kathy met on December 15<sup>th</sup>. Jewel provided an update about working with Ben to create a student survey on current needs and support post-graduation, and an alumni survey to identify overlapping skill sets to help the students. Kathy shared that the committee met with a representative from the library about the usage of the first 10 years of the Daily in an AI project and a discussion followed. Kathy shared information about the timing of each upcoming committee meeting and also shared whose board terms end in June. The next meeting is Monday February 23<sup>rd</sup> at 3:30 pm.

***Finance Committee:***

Robin, Kyle, Jillian and Kathy met on December 11<sup>th</sup>. Topics of the meeting included a discussion of reports that had been generated in the past and their relevance today. Kyle asked about the process of reinvesting when there are good financial years. The FY27 budget schedule was shared, and a brief overview of the process was shared for the benefit of new leaders. No meeting date was set as the committee will follow the dates in the FY27 budget schedule.

***Development Committee:***

Ben, John, Kyle and Kathy met on December 17<sup>th</sup>. At the meeting Ben shared the draft of a one-page info sheet that gift officers can use in meetings with donors for feedback from the committee. Additional discussion topics included a by-the-numbers update, Rivalry and Giving Tuesday successes, metrics, reacquiring email unsubscribes and a calendar of upcoming events.

Ben shared a slide that showed how Student Publications is doing year-to-date and compared to U-M. He also provided updates on reacquired donors, monthly matching gifts, an annual giving communication coming out in February featuring a Daily alumnus on the topic of recurring gifts and sending out impact reports before the end of 2025. The next meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 pm.

**GM Report**

Kathy started by recognizing work milestones for Dave and Ben. She provided updates on building projects including exterior door replacement and LED lighting. She also shared the FY25 and FY26 Publications Revenue and Net Income numbers and other financial information and asked that everyone review the board member contact information sheet and make any updates given the start of the new semester and some new leaders. A request to use The Michigan Daily's name in a book was also discussed. During this portion of the meeting

John also mentioned that a Facebook group (UMich fb alumni) has been using front pages of The Michigan Daily and inserting video clips into them. A discussion took place about distorting the publication. It's not this groups to use as a marketing tool.

### **New Business**

Kathy shared two possible dates for the 2026 Scholarship and Awards Brunch and asked the group to let her know which would be best.

Prior to the Gargoyle leadership's arrival, Kathy started a conversation with those present about Sabrina's concerns in selecting new leadership for 2026 - 2027. She will share the conversation with Sabrina and Xolo.

### ***Gargoyle Magazine - Reporting by Sabrina and Xolo***

- Winterfest today! Gathered 97 unignames at the event
- Starting on Issue 3 on January 20<sup>th</sup>
- Concerns about selecting new leadership for 2026 - 2027
- Issue 2 printing and distribution costs were covered by CSG grant funding
- Looking at adding some new roles to the business team
- Collaborating with the art director on merch
- Looking to make more connections with other orgs on campus

A motion to adjourn was made by Ann Marie Aliotta, seconded by John, and passed without dissent.

At 7:07 pm Chair Jewel Gopwani closed the meeting.

### **Actions Taken:**

Motion to approve November 17, 2025 meeting minutes: John Copeland

Seconded by: Kyle Nowels

The motion passed without dissent.

Motion to adjourn: Ann Marie Aliotta

Seconded by: John Copeland

The motion passed without dissent.

**Next Meeting Date: Monday, March 16, 2026.**

**Future meeting: April 13, 2026**

Respectfully submitted,

Kathy Ciesinski

General Manager, Office of Student Publications